

HODGKIN'S DISEASE. By Henry S. Kaplan. (Pp. xi+452. Illustrated. £8.25). Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press and London: Oxford University Press. 1973.

IN recent years there has been rapid progress in the understanding of Hodgkin's disease and improvements in its treatment so that many patients can now be cured. This has not yet been reflected in the attitude of doctors who too often regard the disease with unjustified pessimism and too frequently give treatment which is merely palliative. This book is by one of the pioneers of the present day approach to Hodgkin's disease and its main themes are the importance of clinical assessment of the patient and the potential of adequate treatment to cure even widespread disease. However, the scope of the book is comprehensive and it deals with all aspects of Hodgkin's disease. There is a good account of its pathology with descriptions of its various histopathological patterns and discussion of their significance in prognosis and treatment. Patterns of dissemination of the disease are described and the importance of an awareness of these in the management of the patient is stressed. Other sections are concerned with the vital role of radiology and staging laparotomy in assessing the extent of the disease to determine the correct treatment. Modern megavoltage radiotherapy and combination chemotherapy are very fully described in other chapters. Each chapter deals with its subject exhaustively, discussing its development and giving many references.

This is an excellent book which will surely become a standard text on Hodgkin's disease. It is written in a style which is extremely easily read, an unusual feature of books of this calibre. Dr. Kaplan is an advocate of the very thorough clinical investigation and aggressive treatment of patients with Hodgkin's disease and some of his views are still controversial. However, the evidence gathered from much clinical experience and the logical approach of this book will win him many disciples. This is a book for the specialist and should be read by pathologists, radiotherapists, radiologists and chemotherapists – all members of the team which are nowadays intimately concerned in the diagnosis and treatment of Hodgkin's disease.

J.H.R.

BASIC IMMUNOGENETICS. By H. Hugh Fudenberg, J. R. L. Pink, Daniel P. Stites and An-Chuan Wang. (Pp. vii+214. Illustrated. £2.20). London: Oxford Medical Publications. 1973.

GENETIC polymorphisms or inherited differences among individuals, elucidated by immunological methods, is a field which may be loosely termed immunogenetics. The authors of "Basic Immunogenetics" have not attempted to cover the whole range of immunogenetics but have selected areas where polymorphism seems to be of particular importance and which illustrate the variety and potential complexity of other polymorphic systems. The greater part of the book, chapters 1 to 4, deals with the genetics of antibody diversity. This section is a succinct review of the heterogeneity of the immunoglobulin molecule. In contrast to the convention "one gene – one polypeptide" hypothesis which has been found to govern the synthesis of all proteins examined to date, each immunoglobulin polypeptide chain is the product of two different structural genes, one for the variable region and another for the constant region of the chain. Although little is known about the genetically controlled regulatory systems in man, some findings are presented which might be interpreted as evidence for the existence of regulatory systems controlling immunoglobulin synthesis.

The second section of the book, chapter 5, which is concerned with the regulation of immune response, briefly adumbrates the genetics of transplantation and histocompatibility antigens.

The final section, chapter 6, is devoted to the genetics of blood groups. Unfortunately, there is only brief reference to the genetic aspects of the immune deficiency states in man. Although the choice of topics reflects the author's own research interest, it would have been preferable to have had more consideration of the immune deficiency states.

However, the writers present difficult topics lucidly. At the end of each chapter, there is a valuable list of recommended reading. The three appendices are superfluous. The overall impression is that this is a useful synopsis of present-day immunogenetics.

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